



Board of Barbering and Cosmetology Statement on "Fish Pedicures"

December 24, 2008

The Board of Barbering and Cosmetology (Board) has received several inquiries about a new trend in the industry known as a "fish pedicure." Fish pedicures consist of consumer's placing their feet in foot bath or tub that contains live fish. The fish will eat dead skin cells off the consumer's feet. The question has arisen whether or not "fish pedicures" can be performed in licensed establishments where barbering and/or cosmetology services are offered.

The Board has determined that "fish pedicures" are not permitted in California under the Board's health and safety regulations.

To make the determination, the Board reviewed California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Division 9, Article 12. Health and Safety. Performing "fish pedicures" is not consistent with regulations 979(a), 981(a) and 980.1.

Regulation 979(a) states, "Before use upon a patron, all non-electrical instruments shall be disinfected by cleaning with soap or detergent and water and then immersing in an EPA-registered disinfectant with demonstrated bacterial, fungicidal and virucidal activity." The Board has concluded that fish cannot be properly disinfected before used on each patron.

Regulation 981(a) states, "All instruments and supplies which come into direct contact with a patron and cannot be disinfected shall be disposed of in a waste receptacle immediately after use." The Board has concluded that if fish cannot be disinfected then they must be disposed of after each use.

Regulation 980.3 states, "After use upon each patron, each non-whirlpool basin or tub shall be cleaned and disinfected." The Board has concluded that using live fish does not allow foot basins or tubs to be adequately cleaned and disinfected as required by law.